

17th Biennial International Postgraduate Conference at SSEES UCL 09-10 November 2022

Ways of Being: Hybridizations of Time and Space in Eastern Europe and Central Asia

The two years which have passed since the previous iteration of our conference has seen the development of two major events with global ramifications, not least in the East European and Central Asian regions. Unprecedented phenomena in our century, the spread of the coronavirus disease regrettably familiarising us with mass fatality and Russia's invasion of Ukraine signaling the return of war to Europe, have both drawn an irrevocable line between former existential realities and new ways of being.

While the Covid-19 pandemic has reinforced the immutability of physical space whose traversal has seen severe restrictions, it has equally instigated a contraction in the limitations of space, as an increased use of communications technology has rendered interaction across the globe more facile than ever. We have seen hybridization abound alongside fragmentation in the symbolic disintegration of physical borders and the reinforcement of their physical immutability. We define hybridization as the process by which an entity is created, a phenomenon emerges or a condition develops through a combination of two or more separate or disparate elements. We define fragmentation as the process by which an entity or a phenomenon is broken down into smaller parts or experiences a separation from something larger than itself.

By employing this conceptual framework, the Russo-Ukrainian war can be understood as Putin's attempt at accruing territory and political power through a hybridization of the nation states of Russia and Ukraine. This war of aggression can be recognized as part of a neo-imperialist and neo-colonial project grounded in a misinterpretation of history. This project can also be perceived as the leader's imposition on the world order of his synchronic vision of historical time, a vision predicated on returning to a specific moment in time through the re-establishment of Kievan Rus. The Russo-Ukrainian war has engendered fragmentation not only by disrupting the traversal of physical space, but also by increasing diplomatic tensions between nations in Eastern Europe and the European continent at large, as well as globally. Here, fragmentation manifests itself most poignantly on the familial level on both sides of the Russo-Ukrainian border.

We are looking to assemble early-career scholars from various academic disciplines, including but not limited to politics, international relations, economics, history, sociology, literature and inter-disciplinary fields to spur the discussion of issues relating to the hybridization and

fragmentation of space and time in past and present Eastern Europe and Central Asia. We therefore welcome paper proposals linked to the broad themes of time and space, as well as hybridization and fragmentation.

Proposals can address, but are not limited to, the following questions:

- How has the history of Eastern Europe and/or Central Asia been affected by hybridization and/or fragmentation?
- How have notions of belonging and identity been affected by hybridization and/or fragmentation in Eastern European and/or Central Asian societies?
- What are some popular ideas of temporality and spatiality as they relate to memory and progress in Eastern Europe and Central Asia?
- How do East European and Central Asian societies perceive the dichotomy of self versus other in relation to temporality and spatiality?

This conference will provide an opportunity for postgraduate students and early career researchers to present their research to a broad, cross-disciplinary audience, as well as to network with other scholars of the East European and Central Asian regions. In keeping with its theme, the conference will be conducted in a hybrid format with keynote speakers, as well as panel and roundtable discussion participants able to participate in-person or virtually. We encourage Ukrainian scholars and scholars of Ukraine as a territory to participate in the conference. Contrary to the stipulations made in the earlier version of our call for papers, we are able to provide speakers with financial support for basic travel and accommodation expenses, as well as various other essential costs on a needs basis. Please contact us for more information.

We are also conscious of the potential disconnect between academic discussion and the realities of war many Ukrainians are currently experiencing. As a result, we will provide supplementary financial support for Ukrainian scholars to enable them to participate in-person at our conference, including speaking at our more informal roundtable discussion concerning the everyday realities of the Ukrainian people enduring the conflict. If you are a Ukrainian national who would like to participate at the conference, please contact us for more information regarding financial assistance. The event will also be livestreamed and facilitate the participation of attendees virtually, in addition to a limited in-person attendance.

Please send your proposals to sseespgconference2022@gmail.com. The deadline for submission is **25th July 2022**. The conference will take place on **9-10th November 2022** at the School of Slavonic and East European Studies, University College London.

Proposals should meet a minimum of 300 words and should not exceed 700 words. Please include your name and university affiliation in your submission. The duration of each presentation should not exceed 20 minutes. The conference will be conducted in English.